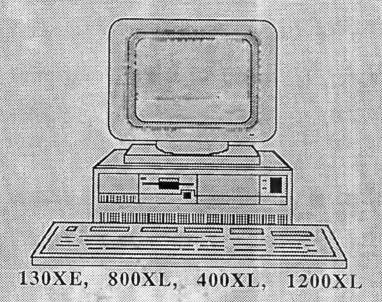
MAY, 1994

ATARI 8-BIT ALIVE

The Newest Magazine for Atari 8-Bitters



INSIDE:

Pabquick 2.0 Review
Review on Bobterm 1.2
CIS & Genie Comparison
The Best 8-Bit Upgrades

Vol. 1, Issue #1

ADDRESS PAGE

As the editor of this magazine, I think it is important that you are able to get in touch with me at all times. I can be reached by one of five ways:

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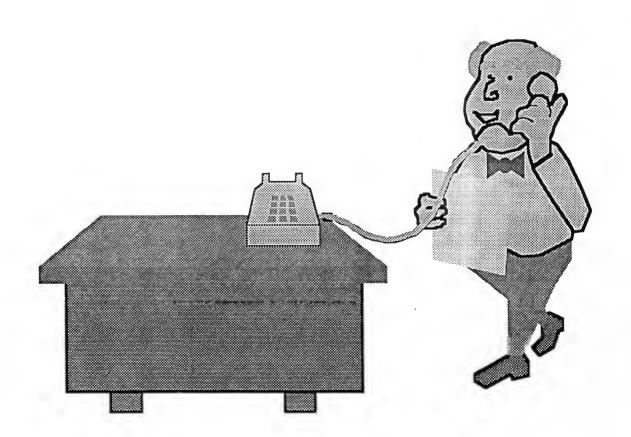
74354.3015@Compuserve.com

Fidonet:

Damon Walker

Phone:

(609) 299-4667



INTRODUCTION

"WHAT IS THIS MAGAZINE"

Ah, a question that is probably going through your mind right this very minute. Well, that's what this introduction is here for!

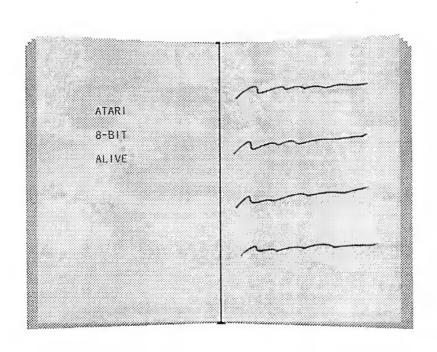
Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Damon Walker, and I am the editor/inventor of this magazine. I am writing to you from a small town in Southern New Jersey called Salem. Where I live, the Atari 8-bit system has completely disappeared and I need as much outside support as possible. I get this support from various services like outside Compuserve, Genie, and magazines. However, I am beginning to find that there aren't anymore magazines that specifically deal with the needs and wants of Atari 8-bitters. This is why I decided to start my own publication. This is the first of what I hope to be many issues. All I need to keep this magazine "ALIVE" is subscribers. For information on how to subscribe and the cost, turn to the back of the magazine. Before doing this, though, please take a look inside! If I get 20 subscribers, this magazine will be printed bi-monthly.

> Damon Walker, Editor



"WHAT'S INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE?"

Inside this magazine you will find information and tips that will help you both enjoy your 8-bit and keep your 8-bit Alive. As of now, the regular departments of this magazine include Software Reviews, Hardware Reviews, Atari Online, Reference Section, and Letters to the Editor. department is explained thoroughly within the There will also be many special articles section. about various topics. Most of the topics will be those mentioned to me by you, the readers. This first issue only will be uploaded to Compuserve and For now, sit back, relax, and enjoy various boards. the magazine.

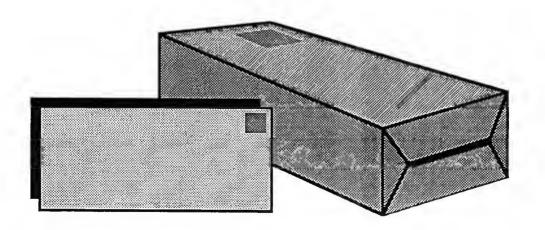


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This section will contain all of the questions and comments that you send to me. Of course, this month it's empty because this is only the first issue of "Atari 8-Bit Alive". Hopefully, next month this section will be full!

To send your questions, comments & suggestions, please write to:

Mr. Damon Walker RD#1, Box 62 Salem, NJ 08079



Editor's Note

This section of the magazine will consist of announcements about the magazine. From time to time, the lay out of the magazine will change according to what you, the readers, want. Those changes will be mentioned here. Also, this section will contain all of my thankyou's. Anyone who submits an article for the magazine will be thanked here as well as personally in a letter. If anyone wants to know anything about me, I will answer those questions here.

For now I d like to thank all of you for taking the time to read my new magazine. I worked very hard on it and I truly hope you like it. A special thanks goes out to Mr. Pab Sungenis for all of his much needed help. I d also like to thank Mr. Micheal Todd and Rick Reaser for their wonderful advice and help.

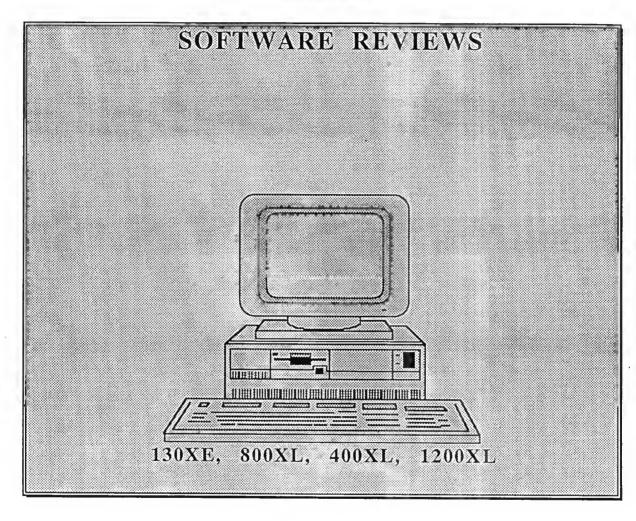
Future issues of the magazine will consist of articles like memory upgrades for an 800xl and 130xe. Also I hope to be able to bring you an article on how a small group of 8-bitters are using their computers in model railroading. It is very interesting. "Printers and Disk Drives For Your 8-Bit" will be the title for another upcoming article. There will be lots of fact filled, interesting articles to help

you get the most of your 8-bit.

In this issue join me in a review on Bobterm 1.2 and Pabquick 2.0. Also in this issue will be the latest on what's happening with Atari in the telecomputing world. The reference section this month contains an updated list of Atari Vendors in the U.S. Wondering if Compuserve is better than Genie? Read an unbiased comparison, also in this issue. The Hardware Review section contains an interesting article on the best 8-bit upgrades. Be sure to also check out the game and computer tip of the month for some interesting tips on getting the most out of your 8-bit equipment. The computer tip of the month contains an interesting article on how to turn your color monitor into a color T.V.

I strongly encourage you to write your opinions on this magazine to me.







SOON TO COME..... TEXTPRO 5.12

Make Me The Perfect 8-bit Terminal Review on Bobterm 1.21

Telecomputing is an important part of 8-bit support. Therefore, it is important to have a terminal program that fills all of your telecomputing needs. Well, I have the answer, it's Bobterm 1.21. It does everything you could possibly need. It supports up to 19.2 bps (though most interfaces don't support modems that fast). It has automatic word wrap, an editing window, 7 protocols, three different translations, and macro commands for logging onto boards easily. Here is an overview of the program, from a frequent user.

File Transfers

Bobterm has seven different protocols for fast, easy file transfers. These protocols include Xmodem, Xmodem CRC, Cis Fast Xmodem, 1k Xmodem, Ymodem, Fmodem, and Ascii. Each of these has a different purpose. Having each available at your finger tips makes Bobterm's file transfer features the most powerful for 8-bits.

Xmodem

This is the standard Xmodem that almost all BBS and online services support. It is a 128 byte block size protocol that uses a mathematical checksum for error detection.

Xmodem CRC

This is almost the same as Xmodem, however, it uses Cyclic Redundancy Checksum for error detection. This helps it catch almost all errors. It is supported by various boards and networks.

CIS Fast Xmodem

This is a Bobterm feature that is for use with Compuserve's Xmodem. It is an extremely fast protocol that helps reduce file transfer time with Compuserve greatly, since Compuserve doesn't support 1K Xmodem or Ymodem.

1K Xmodem

This is a Xmodem protocol that uses CRC for error detection just as Xmodem CRC. The advantage is it has a 1K block size, making it about 15% faster than Xmodem CRC. This is supported by some boards and most network (CIS being the most obvious exception).

Ymodem

This protocol allows you to download as many files as you like without having to keep setting up for individual transfers. The file names are sent in the header and Bobterm decodes them. It has 1K

block size and uses CRC for error correction. It is supported by few boards and networks.

Fmodem

This is a protocol almost identical to Ymodem, except it has a 4K block size for faster transfers. This is faster because less headers have to be sent.

Ascii

This is actually a translation used for text files only. Usually this is used to upload text messages to boards and networks.

Dialing Features

Bobterm has many dialing features to make logging on to different computers a lot easier. These features include an auto-dialer, auto-redial, automatic log on, and BBS phone number list. To dial, just tag the BBS, using the arrows and the space bar, then press return. If the line is busy or no connection was made, Bobterm will automatically dial the next tagged number. If there aren t any other tagged numbers, Bobterm will simply dial the number again. You can set your user name, passwords, and special log on codes in the macro line and have them sent automatically. There are special macro commands that are entered to tell the computer to wait and return.

Translations

Bobterm has three different translations including, Ascii, VT52E, and VT52O. The difference is the parity. The parity for Ascii is none. The parity for VT52E is even. The parity for VT52O is odd. This is for more compatibility.

Other Features

There are many other very useful features included in Bobterm such as the following:

- 1. Alternating between 3 chat buffers
- 2. Chat window (for real-time conferencing)
- 3. Real and online time counter
- 4. Snapshot (stores everything on the present screen in the capture buffer with the touch of a button)
- 5. Fine scrolling
- 6. Usage of Dos commands while online

Conclusion

Bobterm 1.21 is the best terminal for the 8-bit computer, in my opinion. Bob Puff, the infamous 8-bit programmer knew what he was doing when he created it. It is the most compatible and has the most features of all the 8-bit terminals. It is compatible with most Doses, including Atari Dos 2.5, Mydos 4.50, Sparta Dos 2.x and up, and Sparta X. Bobterm also supports all

known interfaces including the Mio, Black Box, XM301, 1031, 835, and Supra MPP. This shareware program is available on Genie (file #5002), CIS (Bobterm121.Arc), and Bob Puff's BBS (716-247-8355, Bobterm12.ARC). You can also get it from Computer Software Services (number in the reference section). Try it, it's great.



"BOBTERM...."

BETTER

THAN

QUICKSILVER??

Pabquick 2.0, The Best Offline Reader???

Offline reading is important for people who do a lot of mail reading and message sending. Since most SYSOPs put time limits on their BBS s to give others a chance to log on, it is important to get an offline reader that is both full featured and compatible. There has been at least two major, successful attempts to do this with the Atari 8-bit. One of them is Quicksilver (which I will print a review on next month!) and the other is Pabquick. Here is a full software review on the latest version of Pabquick, Pabquick

Overall View

This is probably the most full featured offline reader for the 8-bit available. It requires an Atari 130xe, or an upgraded XL, a disk drive, and Super Arc and Unarc programs. ramdisk and joystick are highly recommended, but you can still use the program successfully without either of them. Among the many features are a message twit.dat, joystick handler, and add drop conference commands, 80 column editor and reader, and the newly added jump command.

Twit.Dat

This feature allows you to pick which messages you do not wish to read. For

instance, suppose someone on Fidonet is really bugging you and you no longer want to read any messages from that person. Pabquick will throw away all messages from that person before you read your messages. A lot of people love this feature.

Joy Stick Handler

Pabquick's joystick handler allows you to switch from window to window when reading messages formatted in 80 columns (as most messages are). It also allows you to go to the next message by simply pressing the fire button. It's just another way to make offline reading with your 8-bit a little easier.

Add and Drop Conference Commands

This feature lets you select and deselect conferences while offline. When you upload your messages, the conferences will be selected or deselected, depending on what you choose. This makes selecting new conferences a lot quicker and easier.

80 Column Editor

This feature is used when entering or replying to a message. It allows you to type a message in 80 column format on a forty column screen. As you type, the

screen slides move until you have eighty columns, similar to Atariwriter 80+. This feature makes Pabquick more compatible with the newer IBM boards.

Jump Command

Of all the features
Pabquick 2.0 has, this has to
be my favorite. At the touch
of a button, Pabquick "jumps"
ahead to the next five
messages and lists them with
their subjects so you can
choose which messages you
want to read. This makes
reading a large number of
messages a lot quicker. The
previous version, Pabquick
1.2, didn't have this
feature. It is a great
addition.

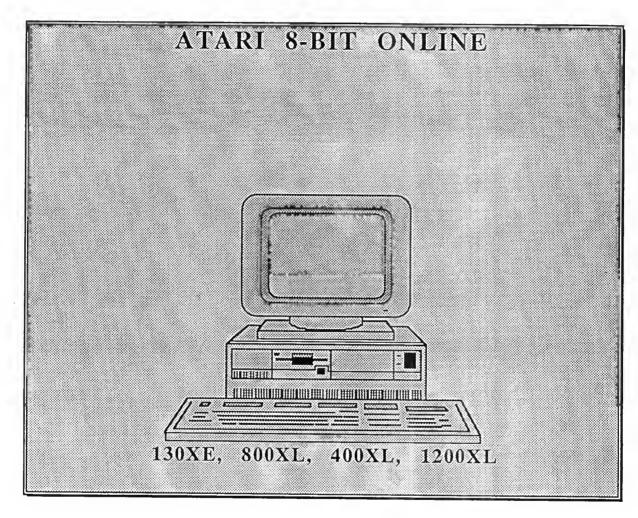
Conclusion

Pabquick 2.0 is a shareware program, available on both Genie and Compuserve (PQ20.Arc). The arced package comes with easy to understand documentation, that tells both how to configure your mail door and run the program. So even if you have never worked with an offline reader before, you should not have any problems getting started.

Wrapping Up

Next issue, join me for more software reviews on various programs including desktop programs, Quicksilver, Syncalc Spreadsheet, and a surprise (it's never good to tell everything) <grin>.





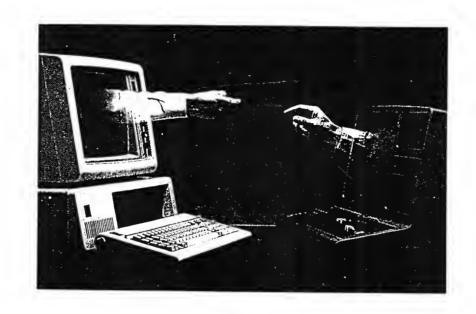


WHAT

ABOUT

DELPHI??

COMPUSERVE SUPPORTS ATARI 8-BITS



Join a number of Atari 8-bitters that are enjoying the advantages of Compuserve. With Compuserve, you can download new files for your computer, join 8-bit conferences, post messages on 8-bit BBS's, send E-mail to other 8-bitters. Also, enjoy Compuserve's other great services such as The Electronic Mall, Reference Services, Entertainment Services, and much more!

To join, just call 1-800-848-8199. Ask for the introductory package.

The Battle of the Onlines (Comparison of Compuserve and Genie)

Computer support is important for any computer, however, support for the Atari 8-bit computers has steadily declined and in most areas (such as mine) is non-existent. That's when we turn to BBS's and online services for our much needed support. If you re like me, your pocket can only stand one of the many online services available. Compuserve (CIS) and Genie are probably the top two services in your mind and it may be hard to decide which one of these two great services to choose. If this is true for you, then this article is for you.

First, let me start out by saying that both of these services are great and have their definite strong points. Which one you choose depends upon what kind of support you are looking for. For example, I'm looking for 8-bit support as well as other telecomputing services, such as electronic shopping, research, and of course support for my 130xe. Anyway here is an objective comparison of these two services.

Price

First, comes what I think is most important, price. Both services are \$8.95 a month. For Genie, this includes almost anywhere

on the service (with the exception of special, but few, extended areas). CIS, this \$8.95 includes the basic services. The basic services include the most popular services on Compuserve, such as the Electronic Mall and some of the reference sections. Most of the computer support is located in the extended services which are charged by the hour. Both pretty much have free mail exchange 'unless you re planning on doing an extreme amount of sending mail). So as far as price is concerned, unless your area does not have a local access number, they re both about the same.

8-Bit Files

Compared to CIS, Genie is the king in this area. Right now, there are over 6,000 files in the file library on Genie, specifically for 8-Bits. These files range from magazine articles, to word processors, to games. Genie has them all. Compuserve's "8-bit file library" is just no comparison to Genie's, period.

Electronic Mail

Compuserve s mail tops Genie s in my opinion (though a lot of people will argue this point with me). The menus are more clear and the addresses are easy to

get to. Genie s mail takes a lot of getting use to and experimenting, especially with uploading messages. Another feature that makes Compuserve's mail better than Genie is the access to Internet. It is much easier to send a message via Internet on Compuserve. addition, you can reply to an internet message using the reply command on Compuserve. On Genie, to reply to a internet message, you have to type the address over again. If you are familiar with internet, you know those address's are long and almost impossible to remember.

Message Bases

This is an up in the air issue. The message bases on Genie are rather confusing and take a lot of getting used to, however, they are just for 8-bit computers, unlike Compuserve's, which are on all Atari game systems, but have more clear menus. Genie does have more 8-bit messages, but the SYSOPs on Compuserve seem to get involved more. So in this area, which is better depends on what you want.

Other Services

Compuserve definitely beats Genie in this area. Compuserve s mall has far more stores and Compuserve has far more services. It has Consumer Reports online, National weather, and much more, most of which are in the basic services. No question about this, compuserve is king in the

service department.

Conclusion

Both of these services are great, and every 8-bitter should belong to at least one of them, if not both. Which one you choose, again, depends on what exactly you are looking for. I hope this article helps you decide which one is better.

JOIN DELPHI TODAY. GET FULL ACCESS TO THE INTERNET



Delphi is the only on-line service that offers full access to the internet. Since there is a lot of 8-bit activity on the Internet, Delphi is a great choice for 8-bit users. Join Delphi today, and take advantage of the special trial offer. Get 5 hours of free online time for \$5. For more information, dial via modem, 1-800-695-4636

When connected, press RETURN a couple of times. At the password prompt, type INFO.

Join today and check out the Internet.

Atari Online News

Compuserve News

The Message Bases

There weren't too many new 8-bit messages this month posted in the forum that pertain to 8-bits. The new messages that are there pertain mostly to news and Hardware. There wasn't anything to print an article on this month.

File Libraries:

As in the message area, not too many files were uploaded to Compuserve's 8-bit libraries, though all of the Info-8 Digests continue to be uploaded to the library. These text files contain a lot of useful and interesting information about Atari 8-Bits. subjects range from emulators to memory upgrades. If you get a chance, download some of these. They re worth it. Also, try the new spell checker. SPELLER.ARC. I have not had a chance to try this program, but from what I've heard, it sounds pretty good.

Elsewhere on Compuserve:

The Compuserve classifieds have a few 8-bit items being sold. It s hard to put what items there are since the list changes almost daily, and this magazine is only printed bi-monthly. In general, 8-bit activity on Compuserve is pretty slow

this month. Hopefully, things will pick up soon.

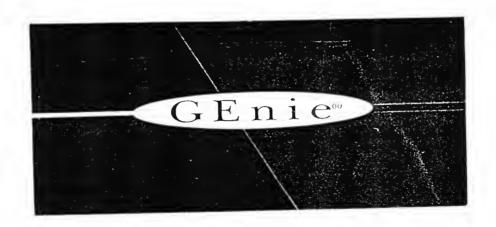
Fidonet News

The 8-bit conference on Fidonet is booming with many interesting questions and answers. This month a lot of questions are being posted on the subject of 8-bit disk drives and emulators. Other messages can be found on Spartados, Mydos, Midi, Atari Corp. and it s 8-bit line, new shareware programs, and much more.

It's great to see how 8-bitters on Fidonet help each other, since there is not very much information on 8-bit computers. If someone has a question about their Atari 8-Bit, someone on Fidonet is sure to have the answer.

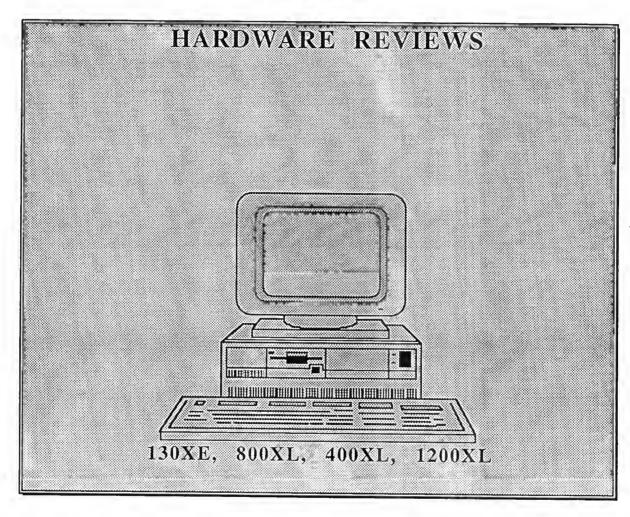
If you don't have Fidonet on your local BBS, then write me a letter requesting a list of Fidonet BBS s. If you have Fidonet, but do not have the Atari 8-bit conference, try and convince your SYSOP to add it. It's really worth it. Please try and join us in this conference so it can keep growing and expanding.

GENIE HAS THE MOST FOR YOUR ATARI 8-BIT



Genie has the most to offer for your Atari 8-bit. Online conferences are held weekly, files are uploaded daily, and the message bases are always busy. In addition, take advantage of other online services such as Genie's shopping services, references services and Electronic Mail. Don't wait any longer. Call 1-800-638-9636.







IS

256K

ENOUGH??

The Best 8-Bit Upgrades (Part 1)

Many messages (including mine) have been on Fidonet asking, "What is the best upgrade for my 8-bit?" The response to this question has been incredible. In this 4 part series, I will share some of these responses to this question.

The first part will deal with interfaces. A lot of people have trouble deciding which interface to buy. This article will, hopefully, help you decide between the top two. (The Black Box and The MIO Board)

Overview

There are many different interfaces available for the Atari 8-Bits. The two most popular and most widely used are probably the MIO Board and The Black Box (although there are a lot of 8-bitters using the 850 interface). Let's take these two interfaces and compare them, shall we.

The MIO Board

The Mio Board has three main purposes. The first is to allow you to hook a high speed modem to your computer. The RS232 port allows you to hook up almost any Hayes compatible modem up to 9600bps. Of course this upgrade is for telecomputers as myself. The

second function of the MIO is a printer interface that allows you to hook up any centronics printer. This includes almost all Epson compatibles. It also allows you to hook up many other printers. For instance, I have a Genicom printer hooked up to my MIO Board and it works well. This upgrade is for publishers and news writers who require the newer printer models. The third purpose of the MIO is a SCSI drive interface. This is mostly used for hooking up hard drives to your computer, but can also be used to hook up high density drives as well. This upgrade is mostly for BBS owners and people who do a lot of program loading and saving. The MIO also comes with a 256k or 1 meg ramdisk (depending on which one you purchase). This ramdisk can be formatted and files can be put on it for fast program loading. I put a lot of my most frequently used programs on it and use it as a "mini hard drive."

The Black Box

The Black Box is an interface that serves four different purposes. It is a modem interface, a parallel printer port, a Scsi hard disk port, and Operating system enhancement.

The RS232 port is the

same as the one found on the MIO, however, it allows up to 19,200bps. The MIO only allows up to 9600bps.

The parallel printer port interface allows almost all centronic printers to work with your 8-bit, similar to the one on the MIO.

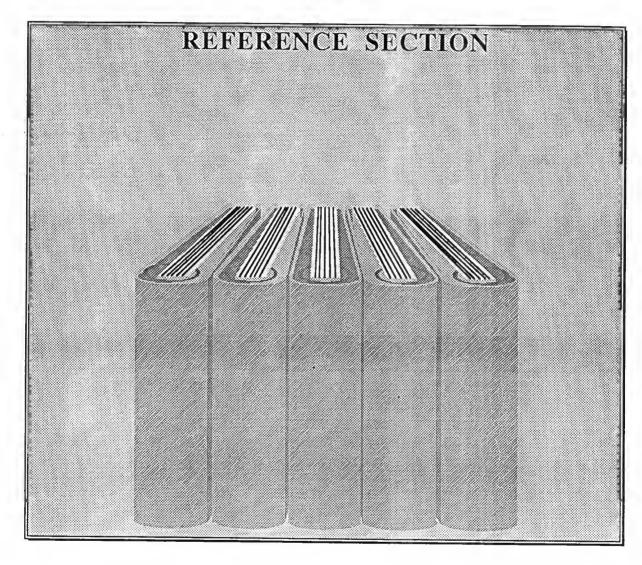
The major function of the Black Box is the SCSI, SASI interface. It is the only current interface that has a conversion toggle for drive compatible of only 512 byte sectors. (Many of the newer 3.5 inch drives have this, which previously made them not able to be used) , The Black Box also speeds up the operation of drive compatible of high speed mode, such as the XF551, modified 1050's and Happy 810's. Another great feature of the Black Box is the ability to go to the configuration menu without leaving the program currently being used.

The Black Box is made by Computer Software Services and sells for \$199.95. This includes the basic unit. For the unit with an onboard 64k printer buffer, the price will be \$249.95. These prices are subject to change, so call CSS at (716) 429-5636 for the current price and ordering information. I haven't heard one person that has the Black Box say anything but good things about it.

Wrapping Up

That's it for this month's hardware reviews. Please join me next issue for part two of "The Best 8-Bit Upgrades" and a report on what Fine Tooned Engineering will be doing with its newly acquired 8-bit line.







ATARI....

MORE

AVAILABLE

THAN

YOU

THINK!

ATARI S-BIT DEALERS

Here is an updated list of Atari Dealers in the U.S. I know this information is hard to come by from personal experience, so I am printing this list to help you, the readers, out in purchasing equipment for your 8-8it.

- 1. Aerion Software (212) 548-0514
- 2. American Techna-Vision (800) 551-9995 or (510) 352-3787
- 3. B & C Computer Visions (408) 986-9960
- 4. Best Electronics (408) 243-6950
- 5. BRE Software (800) 347-6760 or (209) 432-3072
- C&Y ComputerActive (405) 323p5890
- 7. Computer SoftWare Services (716) 49-5639
- 8. DynaComp Software (800) 828-6772 or (716) 265-4040
- 9. The Electronic Clinic (301) 656-7983
- 10. Mangelo's Atar: Software (908) 558-9518
- 11. Fine foomed angineering (408) GET-REAL
- 12. HobbyTown Electronics (402) 289-3572
- 13. K-Products (801) 967-7400
- 14. L&Y Electronics (703) 494~3444

- 15. Mars Merchandising (708) MARS-INC
- 16. Purple Mountain Computers (206) 399-8700
- 17. San Jose Computer (408) 995-5080
- 18. Surplus Computer Software (714) 751-2667
- 19. Yoad Computers (800) 448-TOAD
- 20. Zim Software Manufaturers (609) 971-5807

If any one has any additions to this list, please write me a letter, using one of the Addresses in the front of the Magazine. Next issue, look for a list of Atari User Groups in addition to the updated "Atari 8-Bit Dealers List."

Damon Walker Editor

Atari 8-Bit Classifieds

This section will contain things wanted and things being sold by subscribers to this magazine. Hopefully, this section will help you get some 8-bit stuff at a reasonable price and help you sell some of your no longer wanted 8-bit equipment. Since this is the first issue, the only articles in here are from me, the editor. I predict next issue, this section will be full.

For Sale:

Page Designer, 8-Bit Graphics Utility. Almost brand new. Asking \$13.50 plus shipping. If interested, please call me at (609) 299-4667. Ask for Damon Walker.

Wanted:

Espon or IBM compatible, dot matrix printer. Almost any condition. Looking for reasonable price. Please contact Damon Walker, at (609) 299-4667. Thank you.

Game Tip of the Month

This section will reveal some different game tips on various 8-Bit games. Each month there will be a different tip on a different game.

This month's tip is on Hardball, a commercial baseball game for all Atari 8-Bit computers. It has to do with hitting. If you hold the joy stick down when you swing, you will hit the ball up in the air, between one of the outfielders and infielders, making the ball almost impossible to catch. This works almost every time once you perfect it.

If you have any game tips you would like printed, write me at RD#1 Box 62, Salem, NJ 08079. That s it for this issue s game tip.

Computer Tip of the Month

This section will give you a short little tip on how to get the most out of your 8-Bit system. Each month there will be a different tip on your 8-bit system.

This month's tip will tell you how to turn your "plain" monitor into a color T.V.

- 1. First figure out whether you have a RF input or not. That's easy, if your monitor does <u>not</u> have a separate audio and video input, then it's a RF input.
- 2. Second, get a VCR. (it does not really matter if it plays or not as long as the tuner works)
- 3. Third, get a VCR dubbing cable, or if you have a RF input, a phono/RF cable, both of which are available at almost any local electronics store.
- 4. Fourth, connect an antenna to the regular, or RF, input on the VCR.
- 5. Fifth, connect the VCR dubbing wire to the VCR's video and audio output. Make sure the red is in the video output and the white is in the audio output. If you have a monitor with a RF input, then take the phono/RF cable and connect the RF side to the VCR's RF output (antenna out).
- 6. Sixth, connect the VCR to the monitor by putting the other ends of the VCR dubbing wire to the monitor. Again, make

sure the red is in the video and the white is in the audio. People with RF inputs, connect the phono side of the phono/RF cable to your monitor's input.

7. Last, but not least, connect your computer to the VCR's video and audio input. Make sure the video side is in the video, and the audio side is in the audio. For monitor with RF inputs connect a switch box to the VCR's RF input, connect the antenna to the antenna side of the switch box and the computer to the computer side. If you are using the audio/video inputs. To use your computer, change your input to line. (Refer to your VCR owners manual to do this.) If you have an RF input, to use your computer, switch the box to computer, and turn your VCR to channel 2 or 3 (depending on what your computer is set on). That's all there is to it. Please note that you have to be using a VCR recorder and not a player. A plain video player will not work because it doesn't have a turner.

That's it for this issue's tips, please subscribe to get more great 8-bit tips.

SUBSCRIPTION PAGE

How do I subscribe??

Subscribing to this magazine is easy. Just fill out the bottom of the page and send to the following address with your first payment.

Damon Walker RD#1 Box 62 Salem, NJ 08079

This magazine will be printed bi-monthly. For the remainder of 1994, this magazine will be published in July, September, and November. The cost is \$2.79 per issue, including shipping. For your convenience, you may pay for the next 3 issues at once at a cost of \$8.00. All payments are due prior to delivery. Please consider subscribing. I think it will be well worth it.

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Thanks for your interest. Enjoy the magazine!